



Business

PGE honors diversity and inclusivity in philosophy and deed

By JOY RAMOS
OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

By the 21st century, the American workforce will include a growing number of women and people of color. Forward-thinking companies are challenged to recruit and retain a culturally diverse workforce. PGE has emerged as one of the leading businesses nationwide that honors diversity in philosophy and deed. On Wednesday, April 26, PGE organized the 2000 Diversity Summit at the Oregon Convention Center. Co-sponsors of the event were Hewlett Packard and Providence Health System. About 1,000 people attended the day-long event.

The greater intent by PGE and its co-sponsors was to invite companies and the general public to a seminar that would help effect changes within the culture of their workplace to truly support people of differing perspectives, cultures, and ideas.

A highlight of the summit was the keynote speaker, Les Brown, author and television personality. His inspiring message was on how an organization can embrace diversity to achieve peak performance in the new millennium. Other scheduled speakers were national workshop specialists like Peggy Nagae, a former civil rights attorney who represented the U.S. government in the reprobation case for Japanese internment camp survivors, and Anitra Rasmussen, a senior member of the Oregon House of Representatives,



and co-sponsor of the Oregon Legislatures' Day of Acknowledgement resolution. Some of the real challenges businesses face are things like showing leaders how to identify the barriers and resistance to diversity within their organization, and develop plans which involve the whole culture, not just the Human Resources department. The 2000 Diversity Summit addressed those thorny issues among others such as Affirmative Action, Sexual Orientation and Hate Crimes.

PGE has taken great measures in creating diversity in their employee base, distribution channels, vendor

relationships and customer base. Very few companies challenge themselves in the same way. Competing in the global economy requires changing your organization internally so that diversity and inclusivity are common practice. Diversity experts agree that organizational inclusion is an important part of diversity programs. As Arleen Barnett, Vice President of Human Relations at PGE explains, a diverse workplace "has enriched our team activities, our problem-solving ability, and our strategic business initiatives." PGE's commitment to their philosophic ideal of being a leader in the community by valuing diversity has been exemplary.

Census 2000 from page 1

of North and Northeast Portland between N. Albina, N. Killingsworth, Northeast 20th, and Northeast Freemont were between 40 and 50 percent. During Census 2000 initial response rates for the same area rose by approximately 10 percent, to 50 or 60 percent, Jones said.

Concerned about this trend, Portland's Local Census Office Manager and staff analyzed why this occurred during the last year and a half. "We've concluded that one thing that was very predominant among African-Americans was that they had a strong lack of trust in the Federal Government," Jones said. That was not the only reason African-Americans weren't filling out census forms. "They were concerned about data from the census affecting public assistance or becoming information that would be obtained by the Internal Revenue Service," Jones said. She could only speculate on lower rates of return for Hispanic-Americans and Asian-Americans, for which data was unavailable as of presstime. However, ability to comprehend the census form was without a doubt one factor in lower return rates for these populations. "Any time language is a barrier, that produces a problem," Jones said. Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz led an effort to boost this year's census returns overall, and in a census tract marked by lower return rates this year which exceeded its goals.

"The Complete Count Committee and an African-American subcommittee led a canvass effort in the area with the lowest turnout in 1990," Cruz said. This census tract includes the area west of N. Williams Ave. between Alberta and Killingsworth. On April 24 a door to door canvass was held to boost turnout rates in this area that succeeded, according to public officials.

"The committees, which the census

office has done, have all contributed to a higher return rate in 2000 than in 1990. We share the credit for the increased turnout," Cruz said.

Assisting in the effort was State Rep. Jo Ann Bowman, (D-NE Portland, Dist. 19), who was acting in her capacity as Staff Assistant to Multnomah County Chair Bev Stein. "Already we have exceeded the effect of our success. We've exceeded the target rate of a 67 percent turn in rate," Bowman said.

"What we did was organize a subcommittee to work on doing outreach through the religious community. We partnered through the Albina Ministerial Alliance to do outreach through the African-American community," Cruz said.

The effort, which took place from December to May, was to boost census return rates as of April 1. Urban League Board Member Margaret Carter, (D-NE Portland), who is running for a seat on the Oregon State Senate, has aided the effort to boost census returns in the area of North and Northeast Portland affected by low returns in 1990. She participated in meetings of the African-American Coalition on the Census chaired by Bowman held Thursdays at the Lutheran Inner-City Ministries from 6-8 p.m. She also participated in this year's effort to boost census returns by going door to door and conducting the census herself in that area. Carter explained African-Americans in that area were also reluctant to provide information for fear that it would be used by the Justice System or the State Employment Department.

"It's not going to help me, so why should I fill it out. Legitimate or not legitimate, that's the way many felt," Carter said. She was not surprised by the feelings indicated by many African-Americans. "African-Americans for years have

not trusted the government because the government was not favorable toward blacks in this country. The information on the forms would be potentially detrimental to them." Carter explained that filling out census forms was important for African-Americans because the information would help state officials determine the level of services they would receive, not because the government wanted to invade their privacy.

"We have to get an active role in terms of the level of services and the service needs we have in this community," Carter said.

INSERT COMMENTS BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Jones indicated about 900 temporary employees began census taking in person as of April 27 trying to count all the people in the nation's housing units who did not mail back their Census 2000 questionnaires as part of the largest peacetime mobilization in the nation's history.

This so-called non-response follow up will extend from April 27-July 7, about 10 weeks. Portland's Local Census Office has already hired about 900 temporary employees for the effort.

"Each person wears a badge. If residents are concerned about the identity of the person, they can check to make sure that person's signature, which is on the back of their census badge, matches their driver's license or identification," Jones said.

Those who have the census form should not send it in, but can still fill it out, and when the census worker comes they can just hand it over to them instead of being interviewed.

"They can also call my office and verify that the person at the door is in fact a census bureau employee." Concerned citizens may contact Local Census Bureau Manager Cynthia M. Jones at (503) 808-4160.

Mom March from page 1

"Let's get it on the ballot so Oregonians can finally speak up and drown out those people over there," Burdick said, addressing a group of about 30 protesters who stood on outskirts of the rally holding signs that read: "You shouldn't need a license for freedom," and "Gun control kills."

"The Bill of Rights and the Constitution are important," said Ann Simmons, 50, of Newberg, who

protested by holding a Betsy Ross flag with 13 stars and 13 stripes. "I don't think people are reading it anymore." Gun control is an issue that has gotten a lot of discussion in Oregon, especially after the May 21, 1998, school shooting in Springfield. Then 15-year-old Kip Kinkel opened fire on students in the cafeteria of Thurston High School, injuring 25 students and killing two.

"I think this is really the only

campaign that's dealing with the violence in our community," said Carole Scholl, a coordinator with Oregon's Stop Gun Violence group — one of several groups that sponsored the march and Measure 99. "I think the whole idea of mothers marching is quite incredible," Scholl said. "These are the real people who have to send their kids to school and worry about our kids. We all have responsibilities to make our society better."

Temporary restaurant licenses required for food booths at Rose Festival

CONTRIBUTOR STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rose Festival vendors are required by Oregon law to complete an application for temporary food service license from Multnomah County Health Department. Applications must be completed two weeks prior to the event. The food service license and inspection are measures to prevent a possible food-borne illness in the community. The Health Department is able to point

out potential problems and give helpful suggestions about serving food to the public. On the day of the event, a representative from the Health Department will meet with each food vendor. During this meeting, the representative will discuss important safety procedures for each operation, inspect the food stands, and issue each organization serving food a temporary restaurant license. For more information or to obtain an application for a food service license, contact the Multnomah County Health Department, Environmental Health Section at 988-3400.



HOME FOCUS

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By DAVID LABOVITZ
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

As a loan officer I know what you need to know about home loans and refinancing. In following articles I will address specific topics that you will need to know about and questions that you will want to ask regarding real estate.

The first key to getting a good home loan that meets your needs is to ask questions of the person who you have chosen to help you with getting your home loan. Secondly, get your answers! If you do not understand the answers to your questions, ask more questions. If your loan officer uses a bunch of terms that you are not familiar with, cannot explain things to your satisfaction, or this person is reluctant to help you understand your decisions, move on! Your home loan

is too important in the long run to let someone else tell you what to do. Your loan officer is an advisor for you rather than your decision maker.

Here is a basic starter question for you. How long do you expect to live in the home? 1-year, 3-years, 20-years? Sometimes it is only a guess on your part, but it will help you select the length of the loan that you need. In general, the shorter the time that you need the money from a bank, the less you will pay in interest each month.

Find out how much money you have to work with to buy a home. This is basic to starting the process. You can use savings and gifted funds from immediate family to help you with down payment and closing costs. Many times this will narrow down the type of program that you can go with. How is your credit? Ask you loan

officer to get you a free "single bureau" credit report. Ask for a copy. This is your business and you should have a copy. Beware of someone who will not share your information with you! Take the attitude that it is your business. Most people know if they have decent credit, or if they might have a few challenges. That does not mean that the credit reports show the facts correctly. You must find out what others will read about you. A good loan officer will help you work with any problems.

You now have a good place to start. Find a quality loan officer, ask questions, get your answers, total up all of the money that you wish to use for buying a home, and have a look at your credit. Remember, it is your loan for your home, and it is your business. If you have any questions, call me at 503/234-5160.

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Adair Heard

Commission/Rules Specialist



The Oregon Lottery is committed to having a diverse work force in an environment that encourages personal and professional development.

